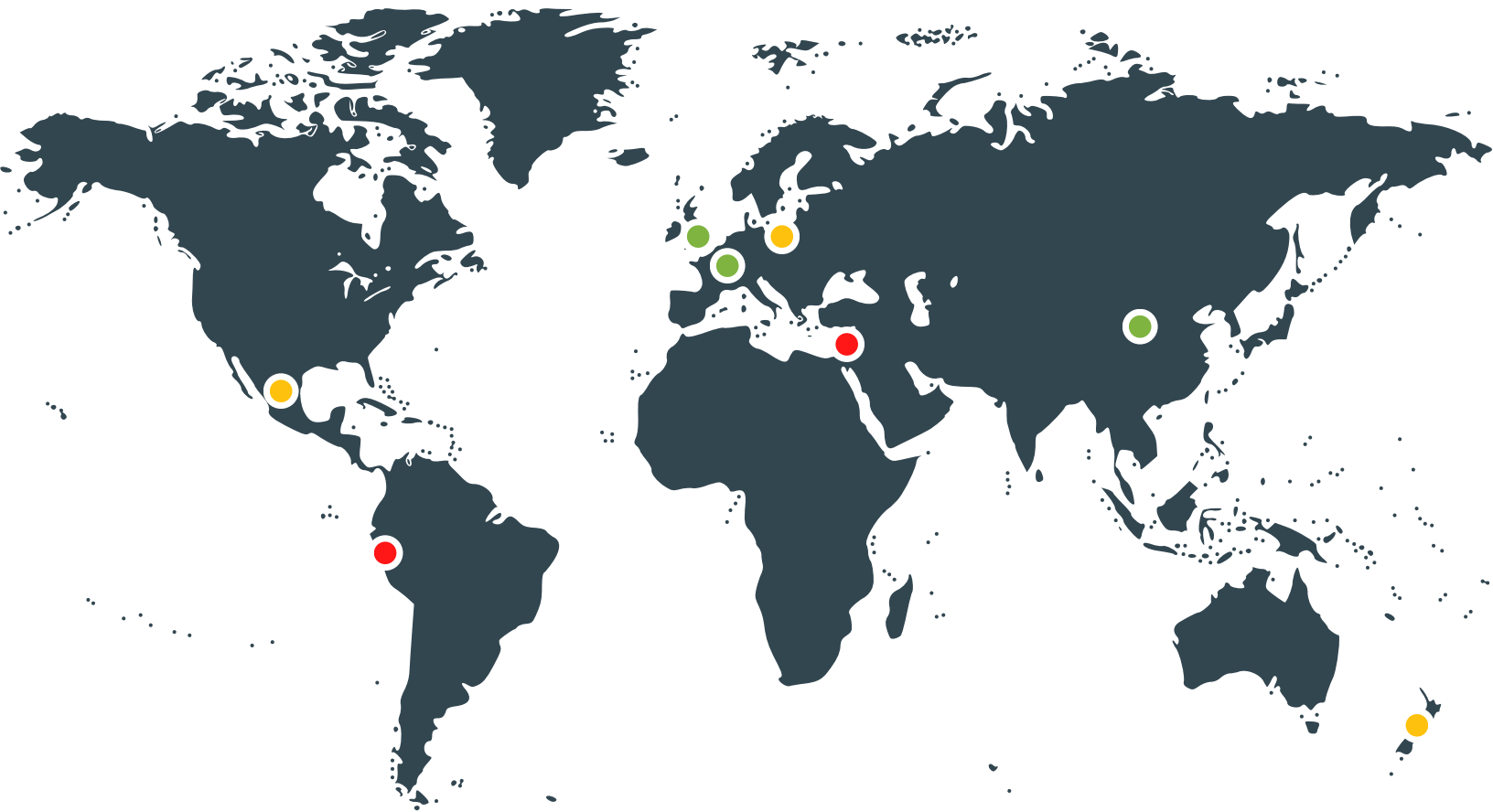


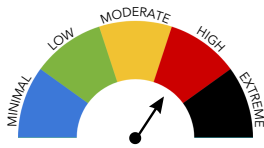
WORLDWIDE HOTSPOTS

March 2023



Concentric identified several hotspots prone to political unease in March 2023, including ongoing protests in Peru, unrest and possible retaliatory violence in Israel, and continued geopolitical tensions affecting Poland. Cyclone recovery in New Zealand and relaxed COVID-19 restrictions in China present potential health and safety risks to travelers. Over the next month, we also urge travelers to be wary of crime in popular Mexican Spring Break destinations and planned strikes in London and Paris.

PERU

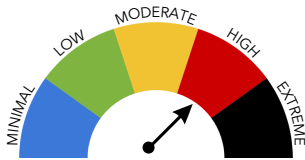


Anti-government protests continue in Lima and southern regions of Peru following the impeachment and imprisonment in December 2022 of then-President Pedro Castillo for attempting to dissolve Congress. Clashes between protestors and law enforcement are common. The Peruvian government [reopened](#) Machu Picchu to tourists, and train services to the site resumed on a limited basis.

OPERATIONAL RISKS

- Travelers should monitor local media for updates regarding planned or spontaneous demonstrations and modify travel routes to stay away from these areas. Authorities extended states of emergency in multiple areas nationwide, which suspends the right of assembly and travel. Visitors should avoid all protests and concentrations of security forces.
- Petty crime, kidnappings, and armed robberies are frequent in major cities, tourist sites, and hiking trails, and crime against foreign travelers increased. Showing resistance to crime generally provokes a violent response. Peru is the world's second-largest cocaine producer and drug trafficking groups and criminal organizations operate throughout the country. The police response is generally ineffective and prone to bribery.
- An ongoing risk of earthquakes and seasonally heavy rainfall from November until April can provoke widespread flooding and landslides. Road travel is hazardous due to unsafe road conditions, armed robbery, extreme weather, and poor vehicle maintenance.
- Peru is witnessing a rise in cybercrimes, including phishing attacks, identity theft, blackmail for human trafficking, and the cloning of online shopping websites. Concentric recommends using secure servers, VPNs, or personal hotspots instead of public Wi-Fi.

ISRAEL

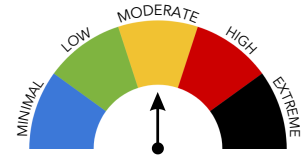


Controversial bills aimed at judicial overhaul [triggered](#) large-scale protests in late February leading to tens of thousands of people blocking major highways leading into Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Authorities are likely to increase security measures, restrict access to popular sites, and close border crossings in preparation for religious holiday observance from March 6 to 8. A recent Israeli raid in occupied West Bank [killed](#) 11 Palestinians, increasing the risk of retaliatory violence.

OPERATIONAL RISKS

- Travelers should monitor local news for updates on road closures and demonstrations. Protestors are likely to obstruct major roads and cause overcrowding on public transportation.
- Travelers should allow extra time while traveling and seek updated security information before visiting the West Bank or East Jerusalem. Travelers should ensure all travel documents are in order and heed directions from law enforcement.
- The risk of mass violence is high. Counter-protestors may prompt clashes between demonstrators, and terrorism is a persistent threat. Travelers should avoid large gatherings and political sites.
- Crime is a moderate risk in Israel compared to other industrialized locations, though violent crime affecting foreigners is low. Petty theft and car break-ins are common in urban areas like Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Unattended belongings are often confiscated by the police.

POLAND

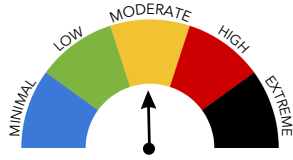


U.S. President Biden's recent trip to Poland and Ukraine is likely to stoke additional ire from Russian officials and could push Poland further into the war. Russia's President Putin firmly blamed the U.S. and its allies for starting the war in Ukraine during his state of the nation address, and Russian officials previously accused Poland of being a "vassal" for the U.S. Poland plays a key role in securing weapons for Ukrainian forces and [boosted](#) its own defense spending in anticipation of potential direct conflict. Authorities [closed](#) all roads along Poland's border with Belarus in late February after Belarus expelled three Polish diplomats.

OPERATIONAL RISKS

- The country's relationship with Russia is strained due to its cooperation with the U.S. and other Western allies following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. More than 1.5 million Ukrainian refugees registered for temporary protection since the Russian invasion began.
- Poland's ties to the U.S. also make it an attractive target for terrorist groups. Approximately 10,000 U.S. troops are stationed in Poland, according to the U.S. Department of State (DoS). Travelers should remain alert and vigilant, particularly in public areas.
- Poland [alerted](#) its security services and public administration against cyber attacks last year after Ukraine reported its defense ministry and two banks were hacked. VPNs are legal and recommended for travelers.
- Poland has some of the worst air pollution in Europe, particularly in Krakow. Winter weather can trigger travel disruptions due to poor road conditions and infrastructure.

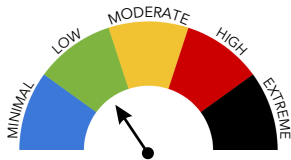
NEW ZEALAND



New Zealand's authorities extended a nationwide state of emergency through the end of February following the destruction of Tropical Cyclone Gabrielle. The cyclone killed at least 11 people and [caused](#) record-setting damages to infrastructure, predominantly on the North Island.

OPERATIONAL RISKS

- *Travelers should expect severe travel and service delays. Many roads in the North Island are impassable due to flooding, obstructions, and closures. Train and ferry services are limited. Travelers should [consult](#) government [websites](#) for travel information.*
- *Up to 11,000 properties are without power, and some communities experienced communications blackouts following the storm. Travelers to the North Island should bring backup forms of energy and communications, such as portable battery packs and satellite phones.*
- *The cyclone increased risks to travelers' health, including mosquito-borne diseases. Travelers should use insect repellent at all times. Travelers should bring potable water as supplies were disrupted in several areas, and residents are advised to boil water.*
- *Forecasted heavy rains may slow recovery efforts and trigger additional flooding. Landslides remain a persistent risk.*



CHINA

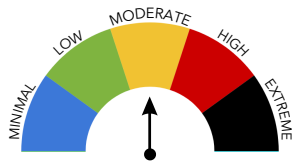
Thousands of residents in Wuhan [protested](#) against cuts to medical benefits for state workers and retirees, leading to some arrests. COVID-19 infection rates decreased since the Chinese government lifted its "zero-COVID" policy in December 2022, though exact statistics are unreliable. Multiple countries, including Sweden, France, and India, lifted COVID-19 entry requirements for travelers from China. In addition, tensions between China and the U.S. increased after the U.S. shot down a Chinese high-altitude balloon in American airspace in early February.

OPERATIONAL RISKS

- *Western travelers should stay clear of any political demonstrations, particularly since China has a strong surveillance system that can easily track whereabouts.*
- *Concetric recommends travelers only bring burner devices and limit their amount of sensitive information. Pervasive and intrusive technical surveillance and monitoring is likely.*
- *Travelers should not post anything on social media platforms seen as critical of the government.*
- *Some COVID-19 restrictions exist, including partial mask mandates and social distancing in public places. Travelers should always bring a mask, as mask mandates are frequently imposed in areas with new COVID-19 infections.*

OTHER KEY AREAS TO WATCH

MEXICO

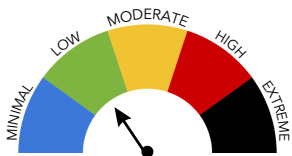


Current security conditions and pandemic-induced economic hardship [continue](#) to [contribute](#) to increased violence among cartels in popular Spring Break destinations, such as Cancun, Tulum, and Playa del Carmen. Clashes among groups inadvertently killed foreign tourists in the past. The U.S. consulate reported instances of local police threatening tourists with arrest as a means of extorting bribes. Cancun taxi drivers [protesting](#) ride sharing services harassed Uber drivers and their riders in January and blocked roads to the Hotel Zone.

OPERATIONAL RISKS

- Popular travel destinations in Mexico experience moderate to high crime rates exacerbated by organized gang violence. Though visitors are most likely to encounter petty crime, kidnapping for ransom and virtual kidnappings also pose a serious risk to foreign travelers. Concentric recommends travelers remain in tourist zones, stick to well-lit pedestrian areas, and avoid downtown areas after dark.
- Protests against government policies are common in Mexico City and often cause road closures. Mexican law prohibits foreigners from participating in political activity, and violations may result in detention. Travelers should check local news for updates on planned or spontaneous demonstrations.
- Travelers should request bottled drinks as tap water is not potable in many areas. Tourists should heed surf advisories as strong currents and rogue waves may be extremely dangerous, even to those on the beach. Air pollution is a severe problem in major cities and earthquakes are routine.

LONDON

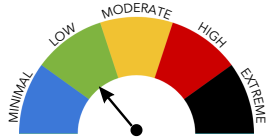


Sector-wide strikes are planned throughout March, including amongst ambulance workers, metro workers, and junior doctors. The strikes probably will negatively impact emergency response and wait times. Weather forecasts [predict](#) a cold snap to hit the U.K. in early March, likely bringing freezing temperatures and snow, and further complicating emergency services and transportation throughout the city.

OPERATIONAL RISKS

- Demonstrations and strikes are common, but rarely result in violence. Most demonstrations occur around the city's bridges, Trafalgar Square, and the House of Parliament
- Petty crimes, such as pickpocketing, purse-snatching, and vehicle break-ins, are on the rise. Credit card "skimming" is common and travelers are advised to exercise caution when using ATMs, looking for any signs of tampering, and withdraw money from bank tellers if possible.
- Although there are no indicators or warnings of an imminent attack, the British government [assesses](#) the terror threat to be substantial. Travelers are most vulnerable in crowded areas.
- Cybercrime attacks, especially data theft from high-profile targets such as large companies, continue to increase. Phishing is the most common form of cyber-attack perpetrated against individuals. VPNs are legal and recommended for travelers in London. Public Wi-Fi should be avoided.

PARIS



Proposed pension reform prompted multiple waves of protests in Paris last month, resulting in 57 arrests during a recent demonstration. Other protests in Paris included a “Yellow Vest” march, a Ukraine solidarity demonstration, and a protest against the Tunisian government. Strikes and demonstrations prompted road closures and flight cancellations. Public transportation workers also threatened to strike in March.

OPERATIONAL RISKS

- *Demonstrations and strikes occur frequently and protests can be unpredictable and have a history of turning violent. Protesters may exhibit reckless disregard for public safety and cause property damage in populated tourist areas.*
- *Terrorism remains a threat and terrorists may attack with little or no warning, targeting tourist locations, transportation hubs, government facilities, and other public areas.*
- *Violent crime significantly increased in recent years, especially in the northern suburbs. Crimes targeting foreigners typically include pickpocketing, break-ins, and other forms of theft. Travelers should keep their belongings close to them in crowded areas and stay particularly vigilant around tourist attractions and cashpoints.*
- *Cybercrime is common in France, and Wi-Fi hotspots are often compromised by hackers to intercept communications or gain control of the connecting device. The U.S. government advises all travelers to use secure Wi-Fi connections to access sensitive private information.*

Intelligence-led security is essential for effectively managing risk in a complex threat environment. Concentric's background in national security enables us to leverage cutting edge intelligence methodologies to improve our clients' ability to detect threats and manage risk. Concentric's in-house research and analysis team has top-tier analytical capabilities and a robust technical toolkit.

Active Monitoring

Periodic Threat Reporting

Online Sentiment & Exposure Analysis

Deep and Dark Web Report

Red Team Analysis Report

Travel Risk Assessments

Security and Risk Audits

Event Risk Assessments

Risk Intelligence

For a more detailed travel risk assessment of these locations, or any other area of interest, please contact Concentric

www.concentric.io

info@concentric.io

+1 866 828 5855